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# USAID IRAQ ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM PROJECT

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT, FEBRUARY 2015

**FEBRUARY 28, 2015**

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Management Systems International.

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Contracted under AID-267-C-11-0005 Iraq Administrative Reform Project

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# CONTENTS

<b>Acronyms .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Public procurement capacity building.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Ministry of Planning Capacity Building .....	4
1.2 Ministries and Governor Offices Capacity Building .....	7
<b>2. Political-economic analysis of the oil sector.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3. Social safety network (SSN).....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Project Administration .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Staffing, Deployment, Registration .....	13
Security .....	13
Close out.....	13
Badges/Visas .....	13

## ACRONYMS

COMSEC	Council of Ministers Secretariat
COP	Chief of Party
COSQC	Central Organization for Standardization and Quality Control
DGGC	Directorate General of Government Contracts
Gol	Government of Iraq
KMoLSA	Kurdistan Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoC	Ministry of Communication
MoCH	Ministry of Construction & Housing
MoDM	Ministry of Displaced & Migration
MoE	Ministry of Electricity
MoEd	Ministry of Education
MoEn	Ministry of Environment
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoIM	Ministry of Industry & Minerals
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSA	Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs
MoMPW	Ministry of Municipality & Public Works
MoO	Ministry of Oil
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoT	Ministry of Trade
MoTr	Ministry of Transportation
MP	Members of the Parliament
NCMDIT	National Center for Management Development and Information Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PMAC	Prime Minister's Advisory Council
SBDs	Standard Bidding Documents
SCOP	State Company for Oil Projects
SSN	Social Safety Net
ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## SUMMARY

USAID-Tarabot continued to provide assistance to a range of Government of Iraq (GoI) partners in the application of internationally recognized procurement processes, through both hands-on training and workshops. Work continues to broaden the precedent set by GoI partners piloting the modern procurement techniques learned from USAID-Tarabot.

As a key measure of USAID-Tarabot's strategy to secure the procurement initiative's sustainability, a range of capacity building assistance started for the Ministry of Planning (MoP). This includes direct training, as well as by including Ministry of Planning procurement officers as trainers and advisors in workshops and technical assistance provided to other GoI entities. The enthusiasm with which the ministry has taken up its role as the oversight body for procurement in Iraq is palpable and an encouraging sign for long-term sustainability.

This month, the Karbala governorate hosted the national conference on standard bidding documents (SBDs) for the procurement of public works contracts. Held jointly with Ministry of Planning, Karbala Governor's Office, and USAID-Tarabot, the conference attracted over **350** individuals from various GoI entities, local and international private contractors, UN and media agencies. Local and international businesses were educated on SBDs, their purpose, how to prepare responsive bids, and were introduced to internationally-applied evaluation criteria.

The national procurement ToT program continued this month with advanced procurement training, delivered jointly by USAID-Tarabot and the Ministry of Planning's Directorate General for Government Contracts (DGGC) to **25 (14 males, 11 females)** government officials. Held at the Ministry of Planning National Center for Management Development and Information Technology (NCMDIT), this advance training focused on standard request for proposals for selection of consultants, and Iraqi guides for implementation of contracts.

Additionally, MoP began implementation of their 2015 training program, by delivering a 5-day workshop on SBDs at the MoP NCMDIT to **8 (6 males, 2 females)** government officials from Council of Ministers Secretariat (COMSEC), and Ministries of Planning, Industry and Minerals, Tourism and Antiques, and Transportation. This workshop provides participants with knowledge on the bidding documents required for turn-key contracts, supplying IT equipment contracts, and design contracts. The workshop ended with an exam supervised by the NCMDIT staff, where the results will be submitted to MoP for evaluation. USAID-Tarabot is limiting its role in building the capacity of GoI entities in SBDs, as MoP takes over future trainings of GoI officials.

USAID-Tarabot plans to introduce a Training Management System (TMS) to MoP, assisting it to manage and coordinate its future training efforts. Supported by the MoP Director General for Government Contracts (DGGC), MoP training department staff will be the holders of this system. USAID-Tarabot also plans to utilize the internal capacity of the project's Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) department, to introduce tools and processes that can be adopted by MoP in order to document and keep track of trainings and the participants.

USAID-Tarabot continued to support MoP in site visits to GoI entities applying SBDs to pilot projects. Visits to the Ministries of Electricity, Oil, and Transportation were carried out by a team of experts from MoP and USAID-Tarabot. Working hand in hand with MoP experts will not only better equip procuring entities in implementing international procurement practices, complying with Iraqi

procurement laws and regulations, issuing tenders, and managing contracts; but also increase the experience of MoP experts to undertake the site visits and training.

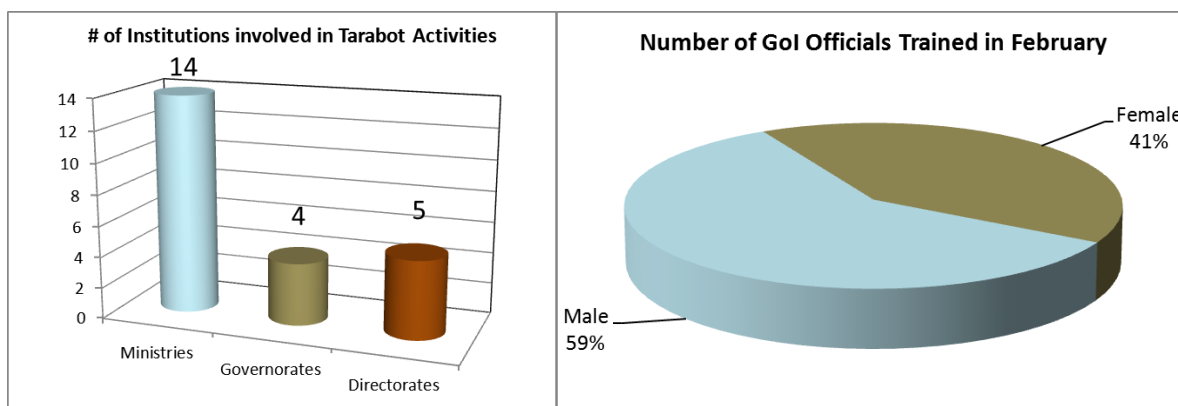
Support continues to the six GoI entities implementing the comprehensive procurement reform package. The Ministries of Electricity, Health, Oil and Transportation, and Governor Offices of Basrah and Najaf are the direct beneficiaries of this II element program, where technical guidance was provided in a variety of areas such as procurement process, planning, archiving, staffing and structure, laws and regulations, SBDs and webpage development.

USAID-Tarabot continued the comprehensive study on the oil sector in Iraq. Relevant information was collected for the study by the team of experts from various public and private sector representatives. A first draft of the analytical study is being finalized. The study focuses on current status, challenges, and proposed solutions for increasing oil revenues, improving project management, encouraging foreign investments, and service provision.

In response to KRG MoLSA request for additional support to improve implementation of Social Safety Net (SSN) in Kurdistan, USAID-Tarabot COP and Senior SSN Advisor met with the minister and technical director of the SSN, to discuss further assistance to KRG MoLSA to ensure that their regional SSN system becomes fully operational. This request was communicated to USAID and a smaller scale of technical assistance is approved. a work plan is being developed and discussed with the minister, as USAID and Tarabot aim to leave behind a fully operational KRG SSN system.

**Events:** USAID-Tarabot project engaged in a variety of activities during February. The following breakdown accounts for the numbers and types of events:

- **Total Events:** USAID-Tarabot teams held (41) events; representing (2) workshop and (39) technical meetings. This brings the total to (212) events implemented since the beginning of the extension.
- **Locations:** (36) of these events were held at locations in Baghdad, while (2) events were delivered in Basrah and Najaf province each. (1) Event was held in Erbil.
- **Total Number of GoI officials:** a total of (34) government officials were trained representing (20) males and (14) females.
- **Institutions:** a total of (23) government institutions were involved in USAID-Tarabot activities in February; representing (14) ministries, (4) governorates, and (5) directorates participated in these events.



# I. PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CAPACITY BUILDING

As part of its ongoing efforts to improve Iraq's service-oriented capital investments, USAID-Tarabot is partnering with the Ministry of Planning (MoP) to support the Government of Iraq (GoI) to make use of its investment budget through fair and transparent procurement systems. These reforms will improve service delivery by lending efficiency and transparency to the procurement process. They will help to create an environment conducive to fair and open competition in the tendering and awarding of contracts, and build the confidence of the private sector in the government's bidding process. In the past, the transparency and efficiency of government procurement has been hindered by reliance on disorganized, paper-based systems and antiquated processes. The government needs to make concrete reforms in order to bring the expertise of international firms upon which the success of complex large projects often rests. USAID-Tarabot works with the MoP to deliver complementary capacity building activities and systems reform with the ultimate goal of establishing unified procurement system aligned with international standards.

## I.1 Ministry of Planning Capacity Building

As the chief coordinating entity for public contracting in Iraq, MoP has been a longstanding partner of USAID-Tarabot in procurement reform, and is positioned to take the lead on Iraq's national-level procurement reform initiative. USAID-Tarabot has taken steps to prepare the ministry to do so through knowledge transfer and anchoring of sound practices. Procurement training provided for the MoP is bolstered by hands-on experience, as MoP staff partner with USAID-Tarabot advisors to jointly conduct workshops and applied trainings for other GoI entities. These ongoing activities are important opportunities for MoP staff to garner knowledge about procurement and acquire training skills, which will be critical as the national reform process moves forward.

### National Procurement Conference

USAID-Tarabot in cooperation with MoP and Karbala Governor's Office hosted the national conference on standard bidding documents (SBDs) for the procurement of public works contracts. Held in Karbala governorate, the Governor of Karbala Mr. Aqeel Al-Turaihi and the Ministry of Planning General Director for Government Contracts (DGGC) Dr. Azhar Hussein opened the conference with participation of more than **350** individuals from different institutions. The conference educated local and international businesses on standard bidding documents, their purpose, how to prepare responsive bids, and introduced contractors to internationally-applied evaluation criteria. This conference strengthens contractors' confidence in the transparency and integrity of the bidding process when standard bidding documents are applied. Participation of the private sector, side-by-side with the public sector, made this conference a landmark event for in promoting a universal understanding of the legal mechanisms surrounding implementing and using SBDs.



*Dr. Azhar Hussein, MoP General Director of Government Contracts offering her insight on the procurement process*

- Issuing regulations and relevant legislation to mandate all government institutions to apply and use SBDs for all projects funded through the investment budget
- Continue to support government institutions in the field of public contracts through training workshops and technical assistance focusing on using SBDs, including continued coordination with the MoP/DGGC
- Continue to support as the key player in a successful contracting process. This should be done through capacity building workshops on SBDs, sponsored by the MoP/DGGC and in collaboration with USAID-Tarabot
- On-going cooperation between both public and private sector to overcome any weaknesses in the contracting process.

بالتعاون مع محافظة كربلاء المقدسة و مشروع الاصلاح الاداري (ترابط)

## وزارة التخطيط تعقد مؤتمراً للتعريف بوثائق العطاءات القياسية لعقود التشغيل العامة



*National SBDs Conference published in MoP weekly newsletter*

The national procurement ToT program continued this month with advance procurement training, delivered jointly by USAID-Tarabot and the Ministry of Planning's Directorate General for Government Contracts (DGGC) to **25 (14 males, 11 females)** government officials. Held at the Ministry of Planning National Center for Management Development and Information Technology (NCMDIT), this 5-day advance training focused on standard request for proposals for selection of consultants, and Iraqi guides for



### Advance Procurement ToT Graduates

implementation of contracts. **12** government officials are from Ministry of Planning. **13** participants from **4** ministries (Construction and Housing, Industry and Minerals, Municipality and Public Works, and Water Resource) and **3** Governor Offices (Babil, Basrah and Muthanna).

MoP and USAID-Tarabot are in the process of selecting the best **20** participants to move to the next level, where ToT training is scheduled for March 2015. Selection criteria are based on exam results, level of participation and attendance, where graduated experts from this ToT training will be fully trained and equipped with USAID-Tarabot's battery of procurement skills. The MoP and USAID-Tarabot will then select the strongest **10** participants to attend one final expert-level training courses on public procurement at the International Training Center of ILO in Turin, Italy after rigorous testing to make sure that the investment to be made in these **10** will have the highest impact. Meanwhile, MoP will start gradually giving them training responsibilities once they return back from the ILO training. Additionally, USAID-Tarabot will stand ready to coach and assist them in the initial and advance phase of training to overcome any weaknesses.

### MoP Implementation of 2015 Procurement Capacity Building Plan

MoP began implementation of their 2015 training program, by delivering a 5-day workshop on SBDs at the MoP NCMDIT to **8 (6 males, 2 females)** government officials from Council of Ministers Secretariat (COMSEC), and Ministries of Planning, Industry and Minerals, Tourism and Antiques, and Transportation. This workshop provides participants with knowledge on the bidding documents required for turn-key contracts, supplying IT equipment contracts, and design contracts. The workshop ended with an exam supervised by the NCMDIT staff, where the results will be submitted to MoP for evaluation. USAID-Tarabot is limiting its role in building the capacity of Gol entities in SBDs, as MoP take-over future trainings of Gol officials.



*MoP and USAID-Tarabot Jointly Delivered SBDs Workshop at NCMDIT*

### Public Procurement Help Desk

To further ensure sustainability, USAID-Tarabot is working with MoP to activate a fully functional Help Desk at the ministry, through developing guidelines for a public procurement hotline. This will include a hotline functional processes, organizational structures for the helpdesk, and job descriptions for the key positions. In addition to easy troubleshooting answers to be used by MoP's help desk, as well as possibly posting a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on public contracting on the MoP's website. The help desk will have at its disposal, teams to trouble shoot and assist Gol entities whenever needed or on call. USAID-Tarabot will provide on job training for MoP's helpdesk staff according to needs and capacity, as they provide support and coaching to Gol entities.

### Public Procurement Curriculum

Government officials participating in the SBDs workshops are providing feedback on the procurement materials used to MoP. With the completion of the advance ToT workshop, all comments will be compiled by MoP and submit to USAID-Tarabot for final revision. Once finalized, the Directorate

General for Government Contracts (DGGC), plans to upload all the materials onto the MoP website for easy access to public and private organizations.

## Implementation of Procurement Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs)

USAID-Tarabot assisted the team of experts from MoP in site visits to the Ministries of Electricity, Oil, and Transportation to apply SBDs to selected pilot projects. For more details, please refer to the sections below for each ministry.

Working hand in hand with MoP experts will not only better equip procuring entities in implementing international procurement practices, complying with Iraqi procurement laws and regulations, issuing tenders, and managing contracts; but also increase the experience of MoP experts to undertake the site visits and training. This will gradually reduce USAID-Tarabot assistance after the completion of the first round of site visits. The MoP is in the process of scheduling second round of site visits, where their teams of experts will take the lead in delivering technical assistance to ministries and governorates. USAID-Tarabot procurement advisors will limit their role by providing consultation, as needed, and is planning to participate on the first day only.

## 1.2 Ministries and Governor Offices Capacity Building

USAID-Tarabot continued its broad procurement reform program with **6** GoI entities; engaging with **4** ministries (Electricity, Health, Oil/ State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP), and Transportation), and **2** Governor Offices (Basrah and Najaf). This program consists of 11 elements, where improvements in these areas contribute to better performance:

1. Implementing Procurement Laws and Regulations
2. Have a Fully Functional Procurement Department
3. Have Qualified Procurement Staff
4. Procurement Standard Process
5. Procurement Plans
6. Standard Bidding Documents (SBDs)
7. Procurement Performance Indicators
8. Procurement Records Management/Archiving
9. Reporting on Procurement Activities
10. Procurement Department Webpage
11. Subscription to dg Market

Progress for each ministry and governor office can be reviewed below, according to the agreed action plan:

### Ministry of Electricity (MoE)

USAID-Tarabot intervention with the MoE is done through the Contracting Directorate, where technical assistance was provided on improving electronic archiving of procurement records, the development of 2015 procurement plan, and preparing the standard prequalification bidding documents for the pilot project; *supply vanadium inhibitor*. The completion of these



*One-on-one Training for Applying SBDs to Pilot Project*

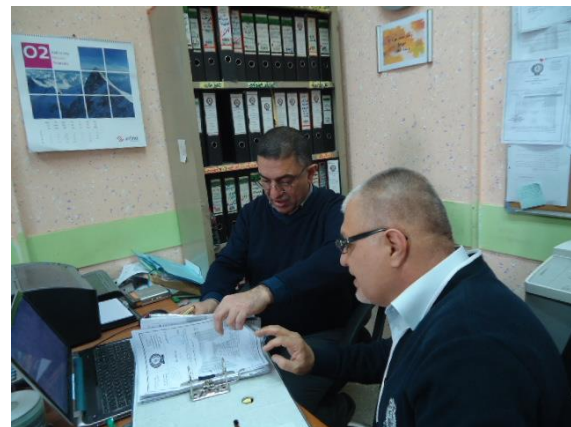
documents will assist the ministry in choosing a qualified manufacturer once the project tender is announced.

### Ministry of Health (MoH)

This month, USAID-Tarabot interventions with the Ministry of Health focused on two elements of the approved procurement reform action plan: applying SBDs to pilot projects, and improving procurement record management and archiving. The State Company for Marketing Drugs and Medical Appliances (Kimadiya) being a key partner and direct beneficiary was selected by the ministry to participate in both elements.

Based on USAID-Tarabot recommendation, the ministry and Kimadiya are in the process of establishing a committee, to coordinate with MoP on the site visit scheduled late March, where SBDs are to be applied on selected pilot project(s). This committee will also be responsible for preparing the necessary information for the pilot project once selected by MoP and the ministry.

Archiving procurement records were reviewed for both ministry and Kimadiya, and recommendations for improvements were presented by USAID-Tarabot. Procedures and tools were proposed to better manage and arrange their contracts. The ministry plans to adopt these proposed procedures and tools with the assistance of USAID-Tarabot.



*A review to Kimadiya Procurement Records Archiving*

### Ministry of Oil (MoO)

USAID-Tarabot engagement with MoO is through the State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP), and Midland Refineries Company.

A committee consisting of 14 government officials was established by SCOP to coordinate with USAID-Tarabot on all procurement activities, including applying standard bidding documents on two nominated pilot projects; oil pipeline between Zubair oil field and port of Faw, and inverse flexibility oil pipeline in Zubair. During this month, hands-on technical assistance was provided to senior staff on completing the procurement plan for the pilot project; Linear inverse flexibility in Basrah. Once the procurement plan is completed, technical assistance will be provided on preparing the standard documents for supplying goods.



*MoO SCOP staff apply SBDs to 2 pilot projects*

In the meantime, USAID-Tarabot continues to assess the procurement functions used by the Midland Refineries Company. A visit to Al Doura Oil Refinery was conducted; where information was gathered on managing contracts and bidding documents preparation. Both assessment report and action plan are being drafted, and will be submitted for approval.

### Ministry of Transportation (MoTr)

The team of experts from MoP and USAID-Tarabot conducted a site visit to the General Company for Iraqi Railways, where hands-on technical assistance was delivered to **27 (14 males, 13 females)** government officials from the ministry and concerned directorate; on applying SBDs to two pilot projects:

- Purchasing specialized materials (Iron E60-1), where the standard document for supplying goods was completed for this special type of Iron. This iron is an essential component of a \$73 Million project planned by the General Company for Iraqi Railways, to extend the railways in the southern area from Basrah to Amarah
- Construction of weather station with residential house in Samara'a, where the bidding documents for project tender related to execution of works was prepared. This \$4 Million project is part of the 2015 plan for the General Authority for Weather Forecast & Monitoring Earthquakes



*MoTr staff apply SBDs to 2 pilot projects*

With the completion of the SBDs for these two projects, the Ministry of Transportation now has two types of bidding documents (supplying goods, and execution of work) completed and ready for announcement. They can use these documents as reference documents in future tendering and contracting. The General Company for Iraqi Railways had published this 10-day event on their official website. For more details, please click on the link:

<http://www.scr.gov.iq/index.php?name=PortalNews&file=article&sid=748>

### Basrah Governor Office

Consultation was provided by USAID-Tarabot to senior staff from the Contracts Directorate on: updating the 2014 procurement plan with latest progress, modifying the 2015 procurement plan, procurement staffing, and future projects for consultancy services. The consultation meeting resulted in:

- An update was made to the 2014 procurement plan. This plan has a total of 722 projects (including 99 consulting services projects), that are on-going projects from 2013 and 2014. This plan was



*Basrah Contracts Manager Reviews Procurement Plans*

submitted to the MoP for review

- The 2015 procurement plan was finalized and submitted to the provincial council for review. Law 21 authorizes provincial councils to participate in provincial planning

The Contracts Directorate has recruited five employees who were on temporary basis to their permanent staff, as it seeks to better plan and manage projects. The directorate is requesting USAID-Tarabot assistance in the process of evaluating and selecting global firms, who can provide guidance on implemented projects that are lagging, and assist in preparing studies, designs, and bill of quantities for new projects.

### **Najaf Governor Office**

Engineers and contract department staff are the beneficiaries of the technical support delivered this month in three procurement areas; application of SBDs to pilot project, improving procurement archiving system and applying Gol instructions on coding for new construction projects.

Najaf Reconstruction Commission has made further enhancements to its website by extending the information shared with private contractors. For more details, please click on the link:

<http://www.najafproject.com/>

### **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**

A follow up meeting was conducted with the Contracts Manager to inquire on the actions taken by the ministry in announcing the tender for the pilot project; supplying, installing and operating three record saving instruments (Kardex). The ministry has communicated with the MoP on the availability of the financial allocations for this project. It has also requested from USAID-Tarabot to continue building their capacity in SBDs.

## 2. POLITICAL-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE OIL SECTOR

USAID-Tarabot continued the comprehensive study on the oil sector in Iraq. Lead by a team of experts, meetings were conducted with oil consultants from the private sector. In addition to site visits to the following Ministry of Oil (MoO) directorates; State Company for Oil Projects (SCOP), Midland Refineries Company and Oil Products Distribution Company, where relevant information was collected for the study.

The visit to Al Doura Refinery (Midland Refineries Company) was to collect information for the refinery's project management functions, performance, and any possible solutions to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its production, while the visit to the Oil Products Distribution Company was to collect information on quantities of imported oil products and its distribution. The team of experts is reviewing and analyzing the information collected, with a first draft of the analytical study being finalized.



*Site visit assessment to Al Doura Refinery*

As part of the study, the oil team also began developing the integrated chapter regarding the service provision for the Ministry of Oil. The Oil Products Distribution Company (OPDC) was selected for the study, as it is the only GoI entity with direct contact with the citizens.

The study will focus on three areas:

- The current situation for distribution of oil products, and the issues and challenges facing the distribution process
- The quality of the oil products distributed
- The administrative procedures that improve and facilitate the distribution of oil products distribution, and the service provision of OPDC

In the meantime, SCOP had requested from USAID-Tarabot to include in the study, further technical assistance in the areas of organizational development and quality management. SCOP had previously benefited from Tarabot interventions under these two initiatives before they ended last year. With the theoretical knowledge already gained, SCOP is looking to turn this knowledge into practice, by applying the systems and methodologies practically on their organization.

### 3. SOCIAL SAFETY NETWORK (SSN)

Under this extended initiative, USAID-Tarabot will work hand in hand with the KRG Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (KMoLSA), and its four main sites in Erbil, Dahuk, Sulaymaniyah and Garman to link and activate the SSN system. USAID-Tarabot intervention under this initiative includes capacity building to ministry staff operating in the targeted sites, on data entry and migration. With a fully functional network, the ministry will be able to better manage payments to eligible beneficiaries, by generating reports on duplicate and non-eligible beneficiaries.

USAID-Tarabot COP and Senior SSN Advisor met with the minister and technical director of the SSN, to discuss Tarabot support to the KRG MoLSA, to ensure the regional SSN system becomes fully operational. This request was communicated to USAID and a smaller scale of technical assistance is approved. A work plan is being developed and discussed with the minister, as USAID and Tarabot aim to leave behind a fully operational KRG SSN system.



*USAID approve re-activating Tarabot SSN Initiative for KRG MoLSA*

# PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

## Staffing, Deployment, Registration

An additional Iraqi local staff was hired to work in Erbil, as part of USAID-Tarabot assistance to the Kurdistan Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (KMOLSA) on the Social Safety Net (SSN) initiative. This brings the total to 27 Iraqi national hired since the extension of Tarabot. One additional expatriate was hired to work in Iraq, as a Finance & Administration Director. Tarabot now has two expatriates.

## Security

The security situation in Iraq during this month was tense, with ongoing fighting in the north and west of Iraq and continued explosions and attacks in Baghdad. The kidnapping of Parliament Member Zaid Al-Janabi, and the assassination of his uncle Kasim Sewedan Al-Janabi led the headlines this month. The MP, with his bodyguards and uncle were kidnapped on Thursday Feb. 12, 2015 by unknown armed men. The MP was released but his uncle and bodyguards were all assassinated. The GoI condemned this terrorist attack and has vowed to take actions once the investigation is completed.

Various airlines have resumed their flights to Baghdad International Airport after the Jan. 26, 2015 incident, unknown fire targeted Fly Dubai as it was landing at the airport.

No official holidays were announced by the GoI, this month. Tarabot staff worked normally and did not take additional holidays.

## Close out

Three damaged generators and IT equipment were auctioned. Offers were made by various vendors, and sent to USAID for approval.

## Badges/Visas

In February, the GoI announced that expatriates can apply for visas through Iraqi embassies/consulates in other countries. They can also get their HIV test done abroad, but it needs to be stamped and authenticated by the Iraqi Embassy/Consulate in that country.

Printing IZ badges is still pending due to unavailability of blank badges.